

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SCUL, PGOV
SUBJECT: KUWAIT VISIT OF U.S. CITIZENS CONGRESS EDUCATION
FOUNDATION

1. BY SEPTTEL, THE PAO IS REPORTING TO USICA (INFO DEPT)
ON THE VISIT TO KUWAIT BY CONGRESSMAN MANN, RABBI KORFF AND
MRS. FRANCES KNIGHT PARRISH. WE WERE PLEASED WITH THIS
VISIT, BOTH IN TERMS OF ITS POTENTIAL FOR DEVELOPING A
NOVEL AND INTRIGUING PROGRAM FOR A FEW KUWAITI "INTERNS"
ON THE HILL AND WITH RESPECT TO THE OFFICIAL AND PRESS
REACTIONS TO IT IN KUWAIT. (OFFICIAL REACTIONS ARE SUMMARIZED
IN THE SEPTTEL.)

2. PRIOR TO THE VISIT, THE KUWAITI PRESS SEEMED INTENT ON
EXPLOITING THE VISIT TO SELL NEWSPAPERS. IT PLAYED UP
HEAVILY THE FACT THAT A RABBI WAS COMING TO KUWAIT IN
WHAT WAS SUGGESTED AS A SEMI-GOVERNMENTAL CAPACITY, AND
THERE WAS ONE STORY TO THE EFFECT THAT THE MINISTRY OF
EDUCATION HAD REFUSED TO CONSIDER THE IDEA OF KUWAITIS
PARTICIPATING IN THE CONGRESSIONAL INTERN PROGRAM. THIS
LATTER STORY PROVED FALSE, HOWEVER, AND IN RESPONSE TO PRESS
SENSATIONALISM OVER THE VISIT OF A RABBI, THE MINISTRY OF
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INFORMATION ISSUED A MATTER OF FACT PRESS RELEASE WHICH
EXPLAINED THAT CONGRESSMAN MANN WAS LEADING THE VISIT AND
THAT IT HAD BEEN ARRANGED BY THE CONGRESSMAN THROUGH THE
KUWAITI EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON. THE PRESS RELEASE TERMED
PRESS EXCITEMENT ABOUT THE RABBI'S PRESENCE IN KUWAIT
CONFUSING, "INCITING AND BIASED." IT ADDED THAT THE GOK
WELCOMES "ANYONE WHO COMES TO OUR LAND ON AN OFFICIAL

VISIT."

3. AFTER THIS FIRST PRESS FLURRY, THE VISITORS' ACTIVITIES AND COMMENTS TO REPORTERS WERE WIDELY AND OBJECTIVELY COVERED. THE COMMENTS WHICH THE VISITORS REPORTEDLY MADE WERE EVEN FOUND UNOBJECTIONABLE BY OFTEN ANTI-US EDITORIALISTS (WHO MAY HAVE BEEN SOMEWHAT COWED BY THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION'S IMPLIED GUIDANCE IN ITS PRESS RELEASE). COMPARING THE INITIAL PRESS REACTION TO THE LATER COVERAGE, PLUS THE ACTUAL RESULTS OF THE VISIT, ONE COULD CONCLUDE THAT THERE HAD BEEN SOMETHING OF A "PSYCHOLOGICAL BARRIER" BROKEN IN SOME CIRCLES IN KUWAIT BY THE OFFICIAL AND PRESS ACKNOWLEDGEMENT THAT THE GOK DEALT WITH THESE VISITORS AS IT WOULD WITH ANY OTHER SIMILAR GROUP.

4. SINCE MANY KUWAITIS APPARENTLY VIEWED THIS VISIT AS AN "OFFICIAL" ONE, AND THE COMMENTS MADE BY THE VISITORS AS OFFICIAL VIEWS, WE WERE PARTICULARLY WATCHFUL OF PRESS COVERAGE OF CONGRESSMAN MANN'S REPORTED REMARKS. AL-SIYASAH AND THE ARAB TIMES REPORTED THE CONGRESSMAN AS FAVORING A "SPLIT" OF THE "ARMS PACKAGE TO ISRAEL, SAUDI ARABIA AND EGYPT" BUT AS SUPPORTING SALES TO ALL THREE COUNTRIES AND EXPECTING CONGRESS TO PERMIT ALL THESE SALES. CONGRESSMAN MANN ALSO REPORTEDLY SAID THAT CONGRESS IS UNLIKELY TO PASS PRES. CARTER'S ENERGY BILL IN THE NEAR FUTURE, BUT ASSERTED THAT THOSE WHO HAD ALLEGED THAT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PASSAGE WOULD CUT OIL IMPORTS, CURE THE TRADE DEFICIT AND THUS HELP DOLLAR RECOVERY WERE GUILTY OF OVER-STATEMENT. THE CONGRESSMAN IS REPORTED TO HAVE FAVORED PASSAGE BECAUSE OF THE PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECT ON INVESTORS AND THE LONG TERM EFFECTS UPON IMPORTS AND THE DOLLAR. MAESTRONE

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